



— AN ASSASSIN'S CREED[®] SERIES —

VAN LENTE • CALERO

MAY '16
COVER A

TEMPLARS



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ASSASSIN'S CREED TEMPLARS

BLACK CROSS

Darius Gift has fallen foul of a pretty face and a charming smile, jeopardizing his first mission for the Templar Order. But all is not completely lost... yet.

Out of the darkness appears Black Cross, in hot pursuit of the men who can lead him to his target, and the root of the evil polluting the Shanghai Rite. When Darius stumbles across his path, Black Cross finds himself guided by his moral compass to do what he can for the unfortunate boy...



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YOU HAVE
NO IDEA WHAT
YOU'RE DEALING
WITH!
NONE!



TOOK
THE WORDS
RIGHT OUT OF
MY MOUTH.



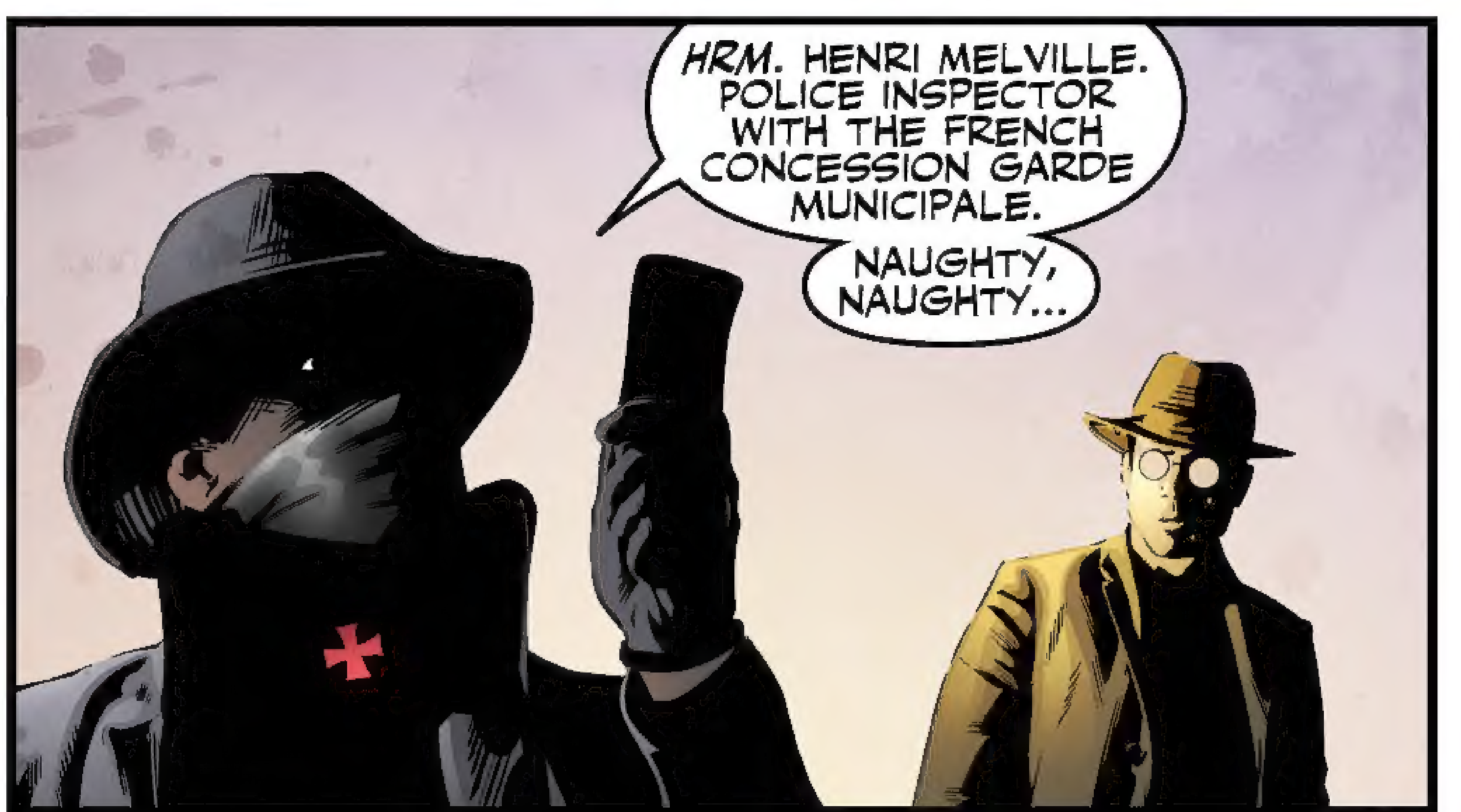
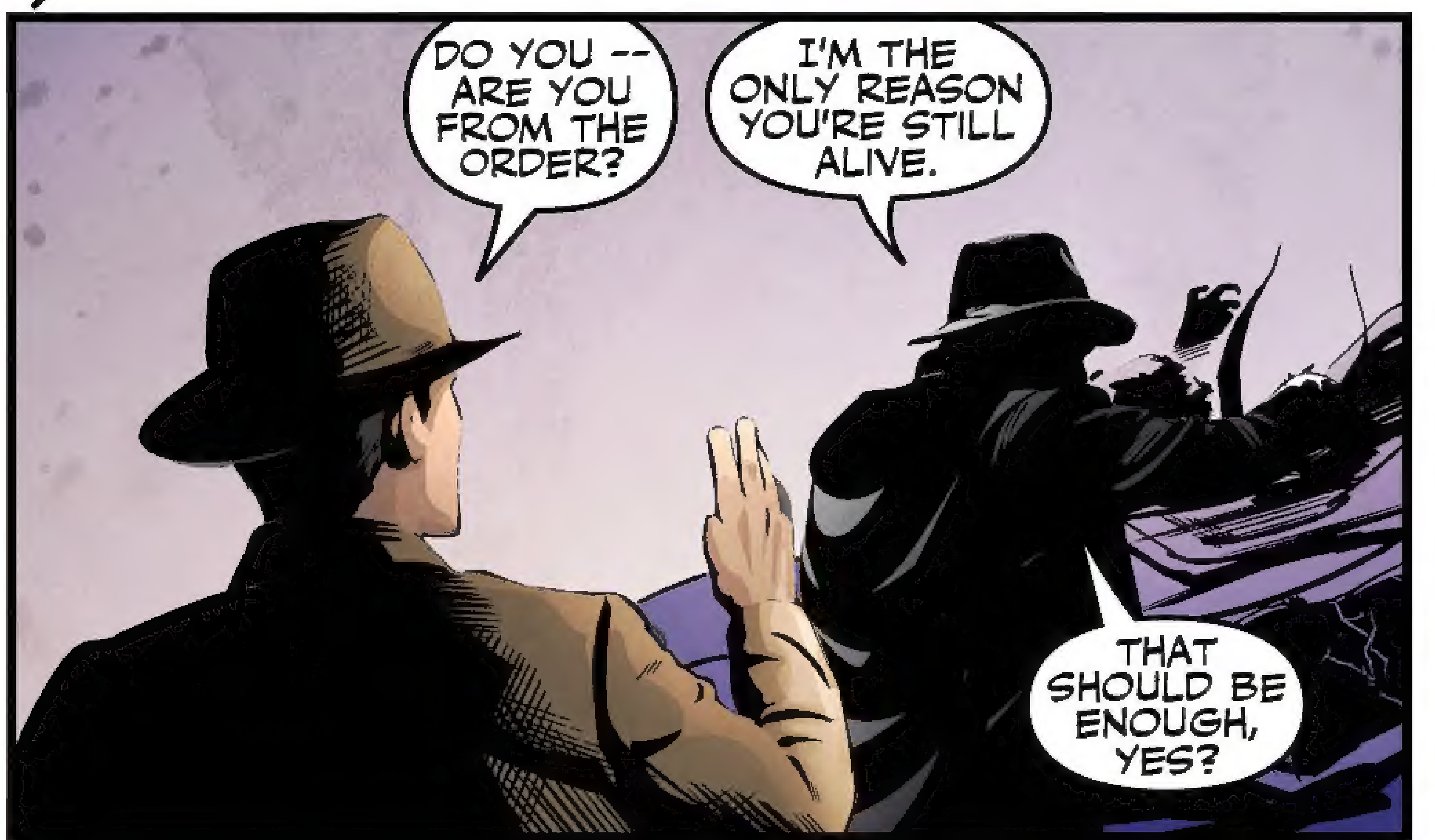
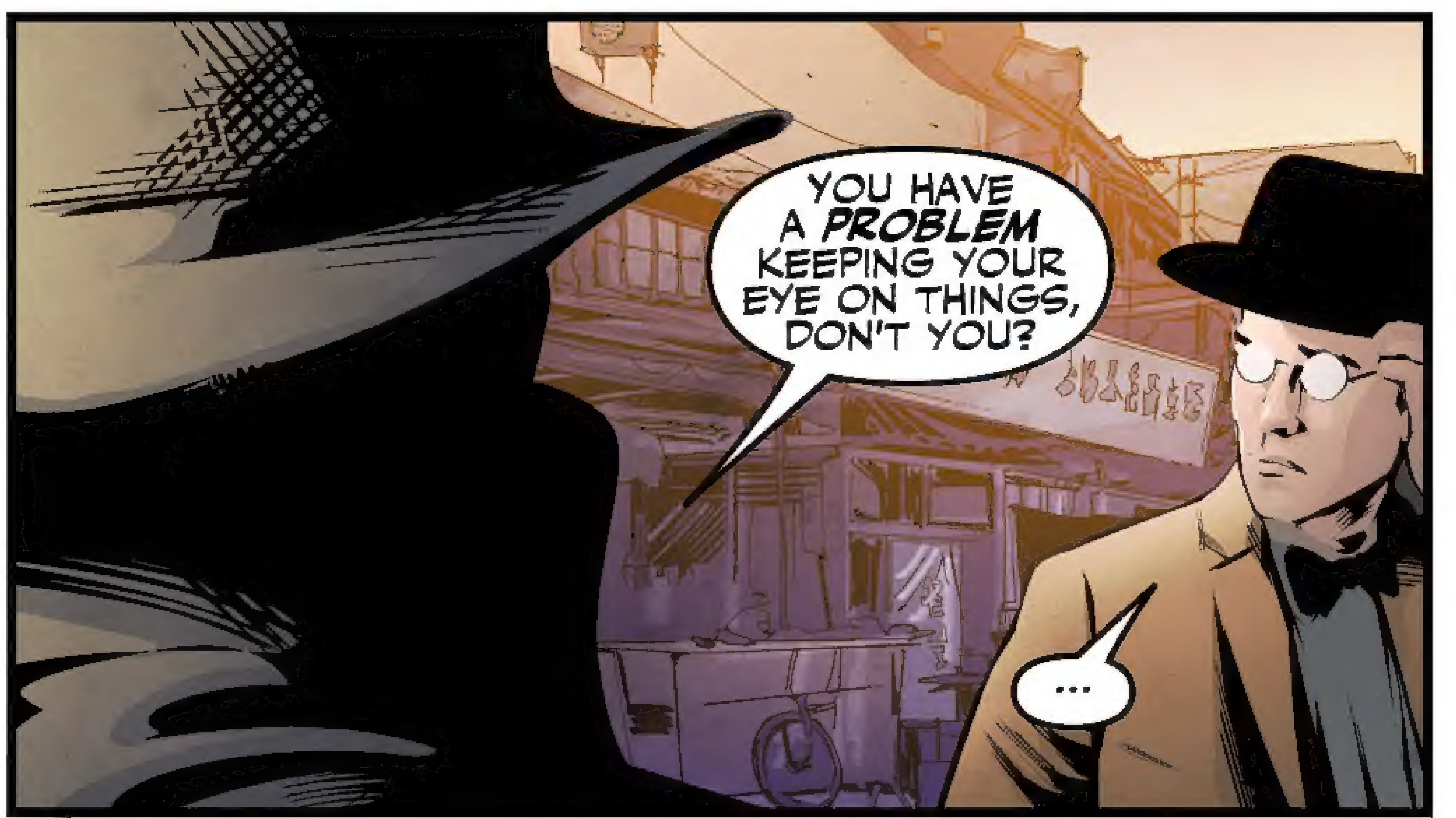
YOU
TEMPLARS --
YOU'RE DONE IN
SHANGHAI!

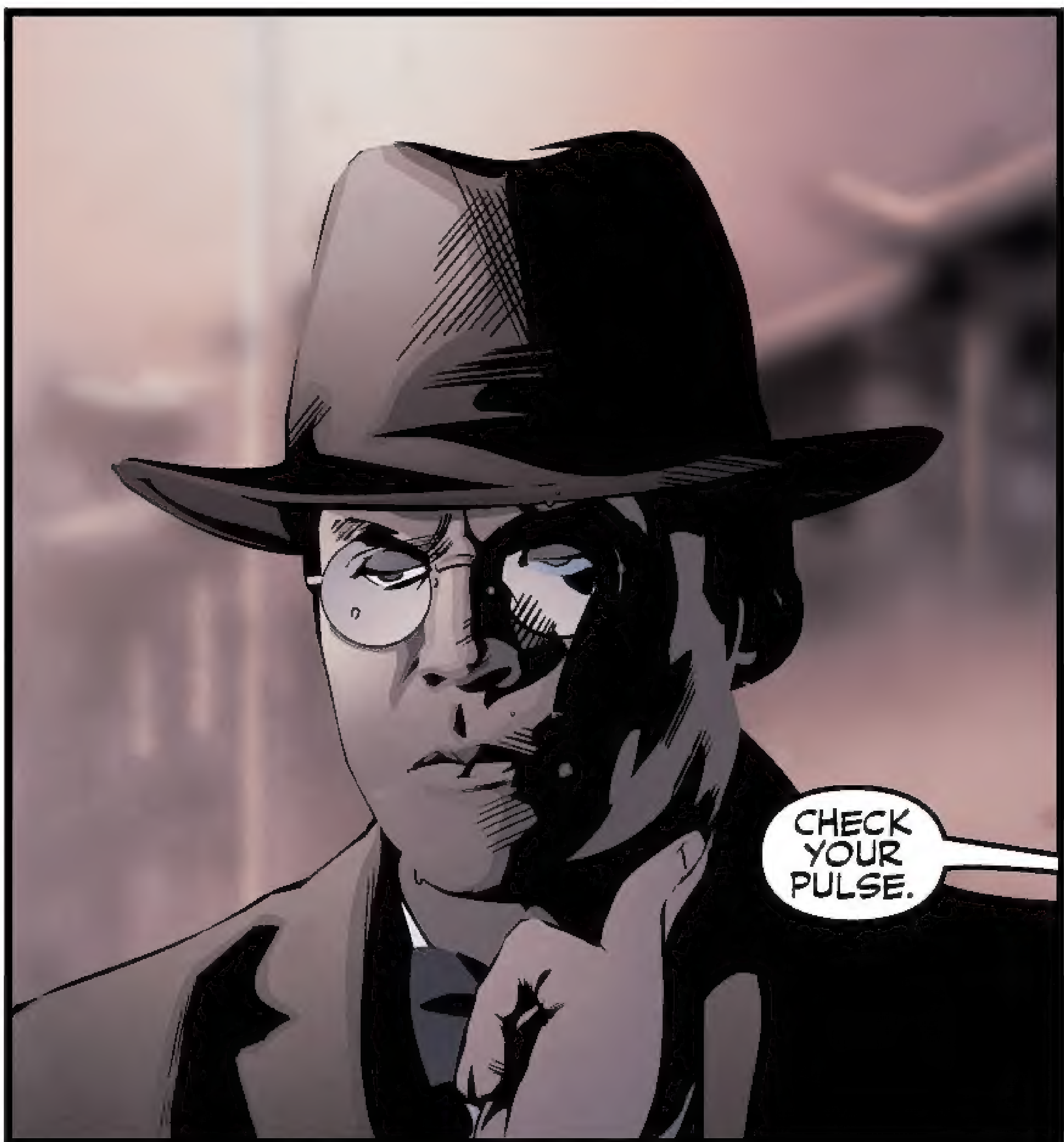
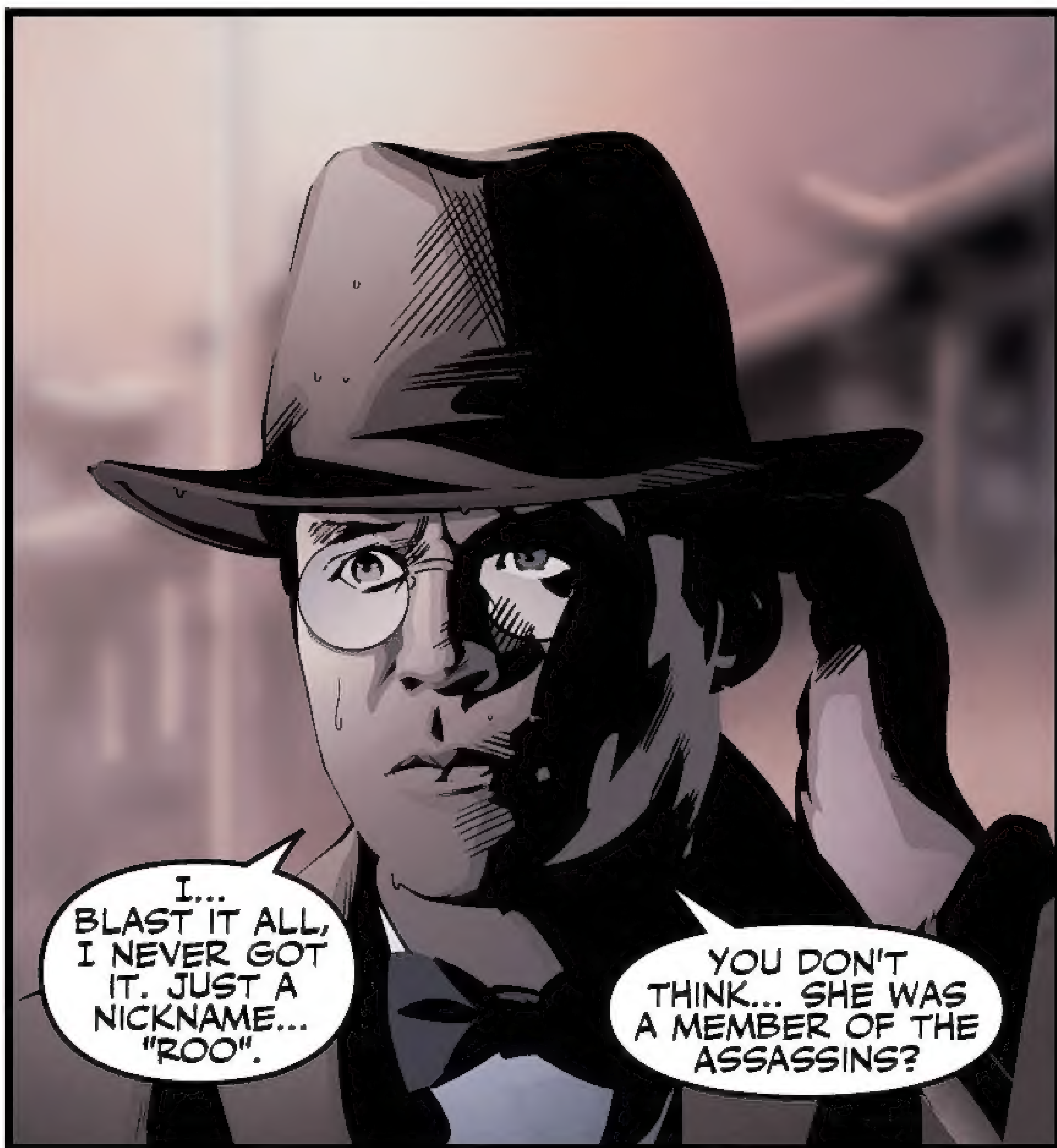
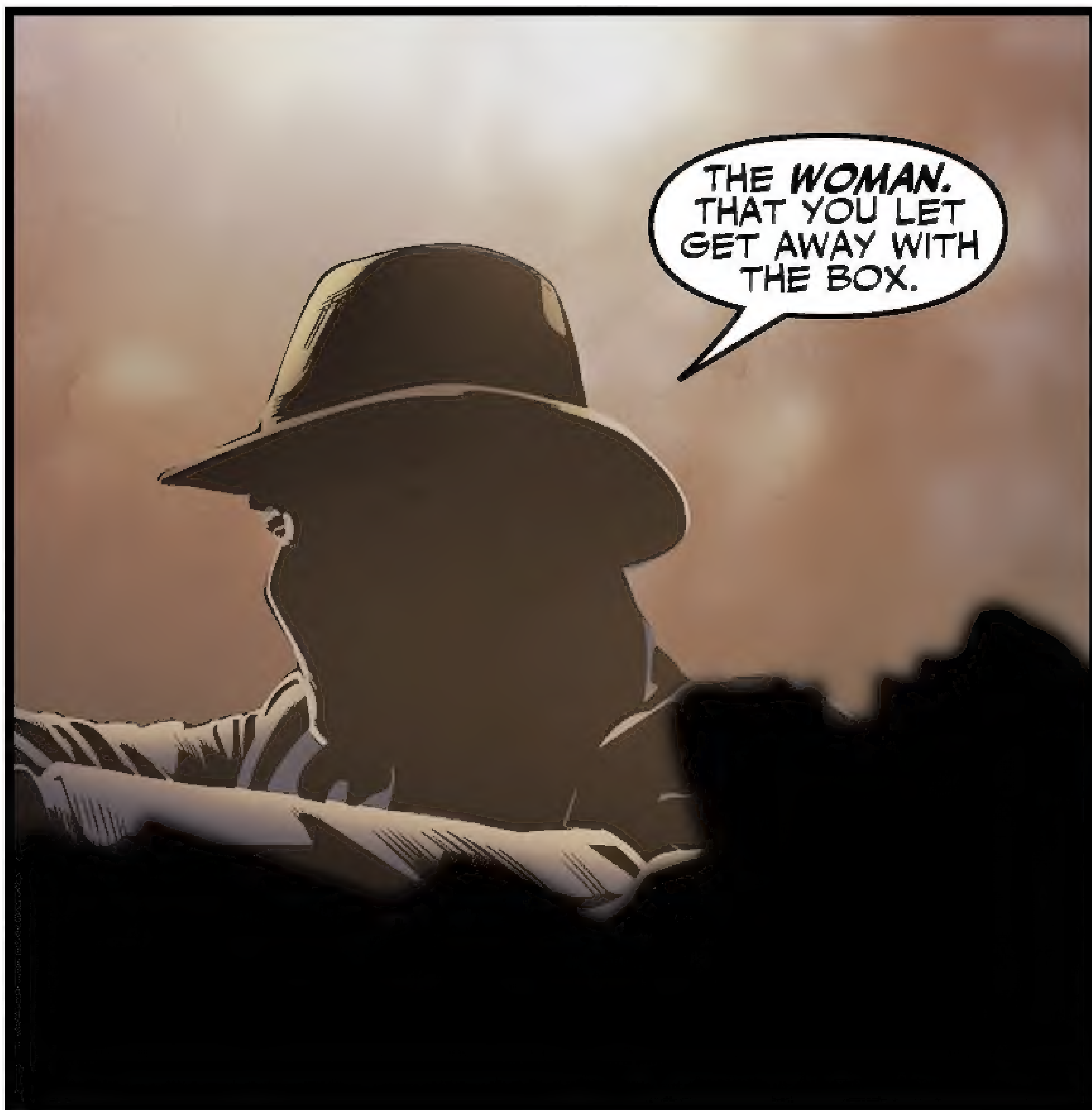


YOU'RE
DONE IN
CHINA!
NO ONE
WANTS YOU
HERE!

ALAS.
WE ARE LIKE
TRUTH.
ALWAYS
ALL AROUND
YOU...









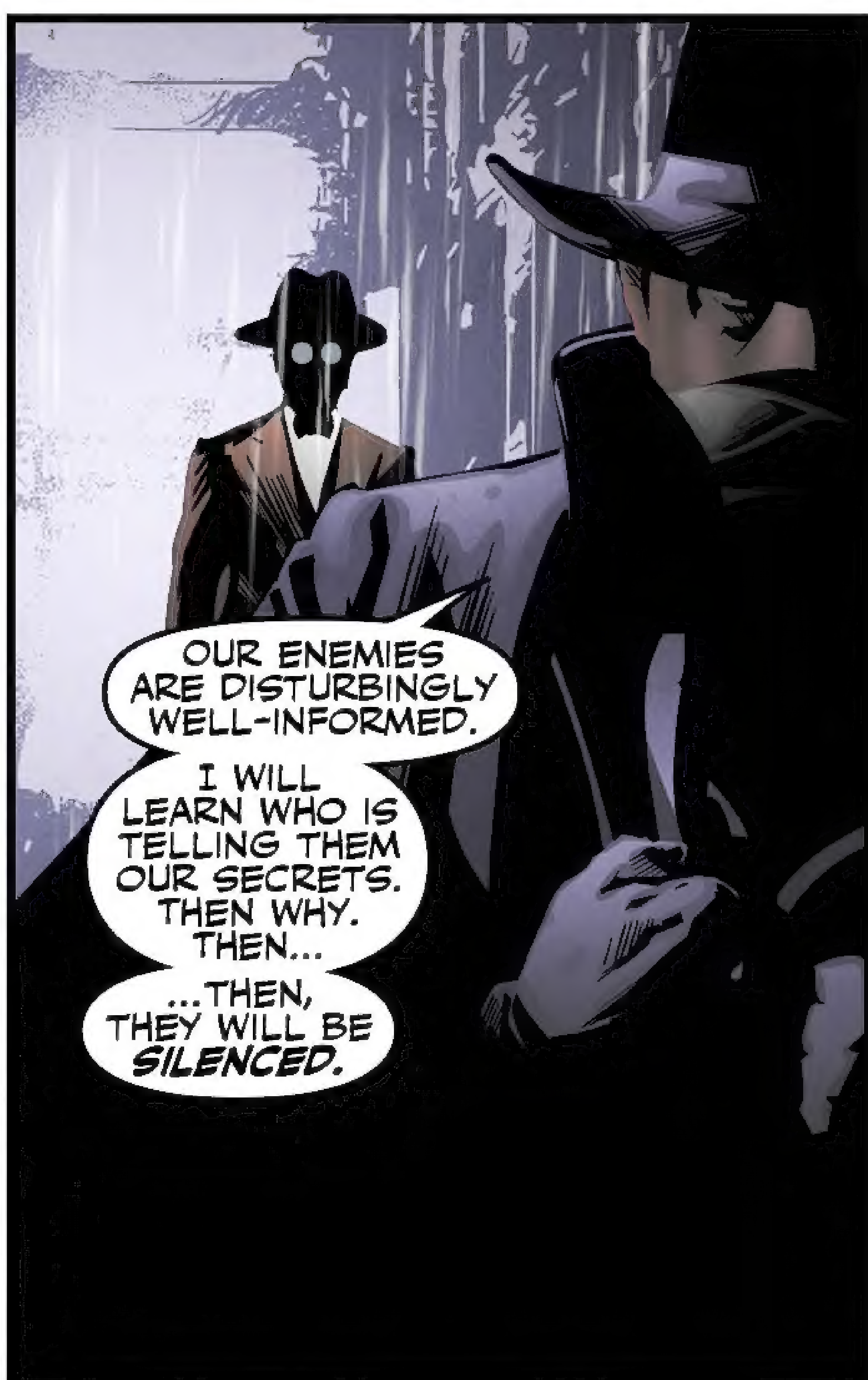
THIS
MAN?



CHOKE?

SHOT. SMALL
CALIBER. NOT
THE ASSASSINS'
STYLE.

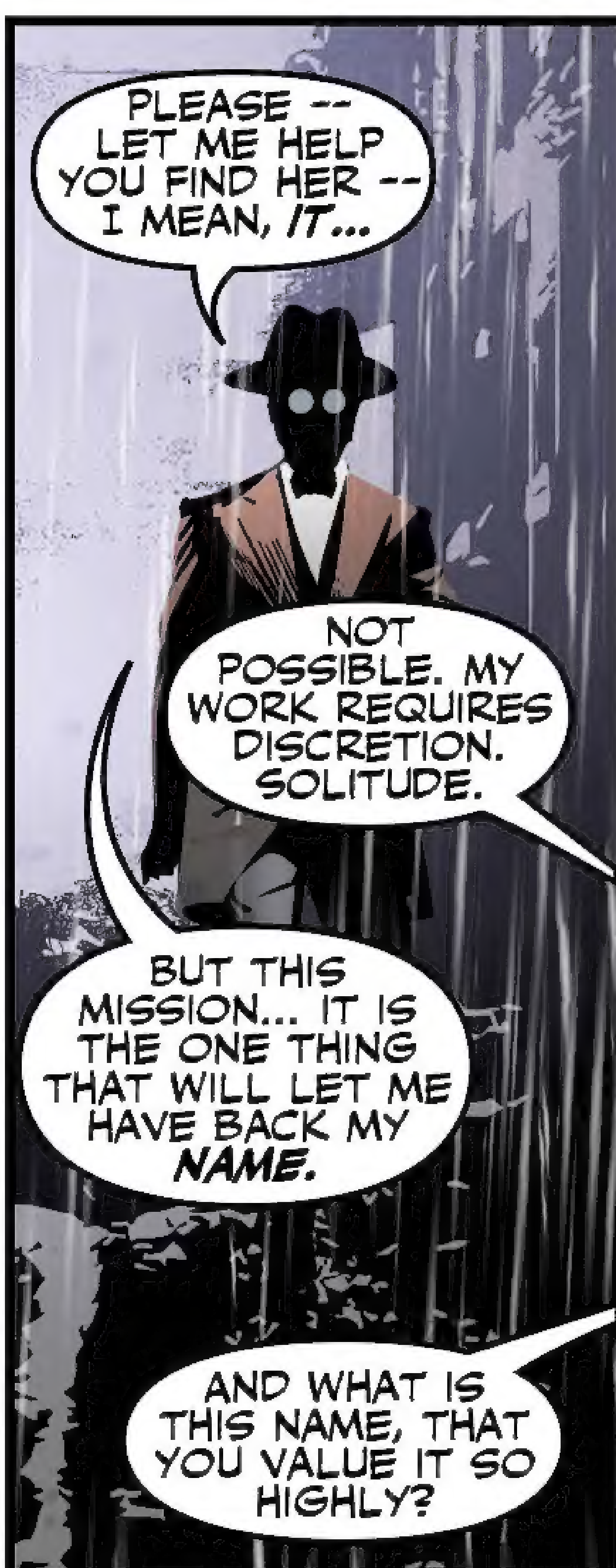
I'D
WAGER HE WAS
AMBUSHED BY
OUR FRENCH
FRIENDS.



OUR ENEMIES
ARE DISTURBINGLY
WELL-INFORMED.

I WILL
LEARN WHO IS
TELLING THEM
OUR SECRETS.
THEN WHY.
THEN...

...THEN,
THEY WILL BE
SILENCED.



PLEASE --
LET ME HELP
YOU FIND HER --
I MEAN, IT...

NOT
POSSIBLE. MY
WORK REQUIRES
DISCRETION.
SOLITUDE.

BUT THIS
MISSION... IT IS
THE ONE THING
THAT WILL LET ME
HAVE BACK MY
NAME.

AND WHAT IS
THIS NAME, THAT
YOU VALUE IT SO
HIGHLY?



I AM DARIUS
GIFT. OF THE
KNIGHTSBRIDGE
GIFTS.



...



FATHER?

FATHER,
YOU STILL
THERE?

FAMILY.
HONOR.
THESE THINGS ARE
NOTHING NEXT TO THE
TEMPLAR ORDER. THE
ONE SOURCE OF **LIGHT**
IN A **MIDNIGHT**
WORLD--

I KNOW! I
WANT NOTHING
MORE THAN TO SERVE
THE ORDER! TO SAVE
THE WORLD! WITH ALL
MY HEART.

AND IF I
SUCCEED IN MY
TASK, THE MASTER
OF THE TEMPLE
SAYS I SHALL!

DID YOU
SEE WHAT WAS
INSIDE THE
BOX?

NO.



NO? A
LONG VOYAGE IN A
LONELY STATEROOM,
AND YOU NEVER
THOUGHT TO LOOK
IN IT ONCE?

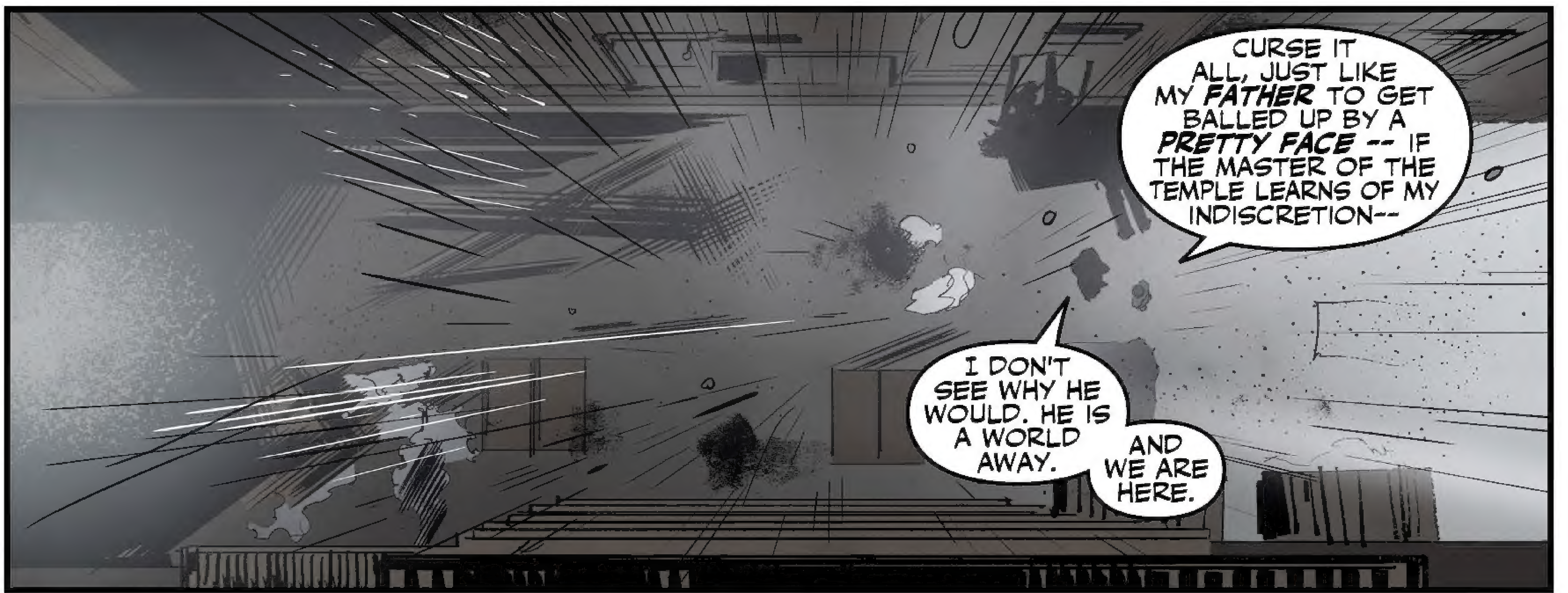


I... I
THOUGHT OF IT,
CERTAINLY, BUT I
WAS GIVEN STRICT
INSTRUCTIONS
NOT TO.

AND I
GAVE MY
WORD I
WOULD
NOT.



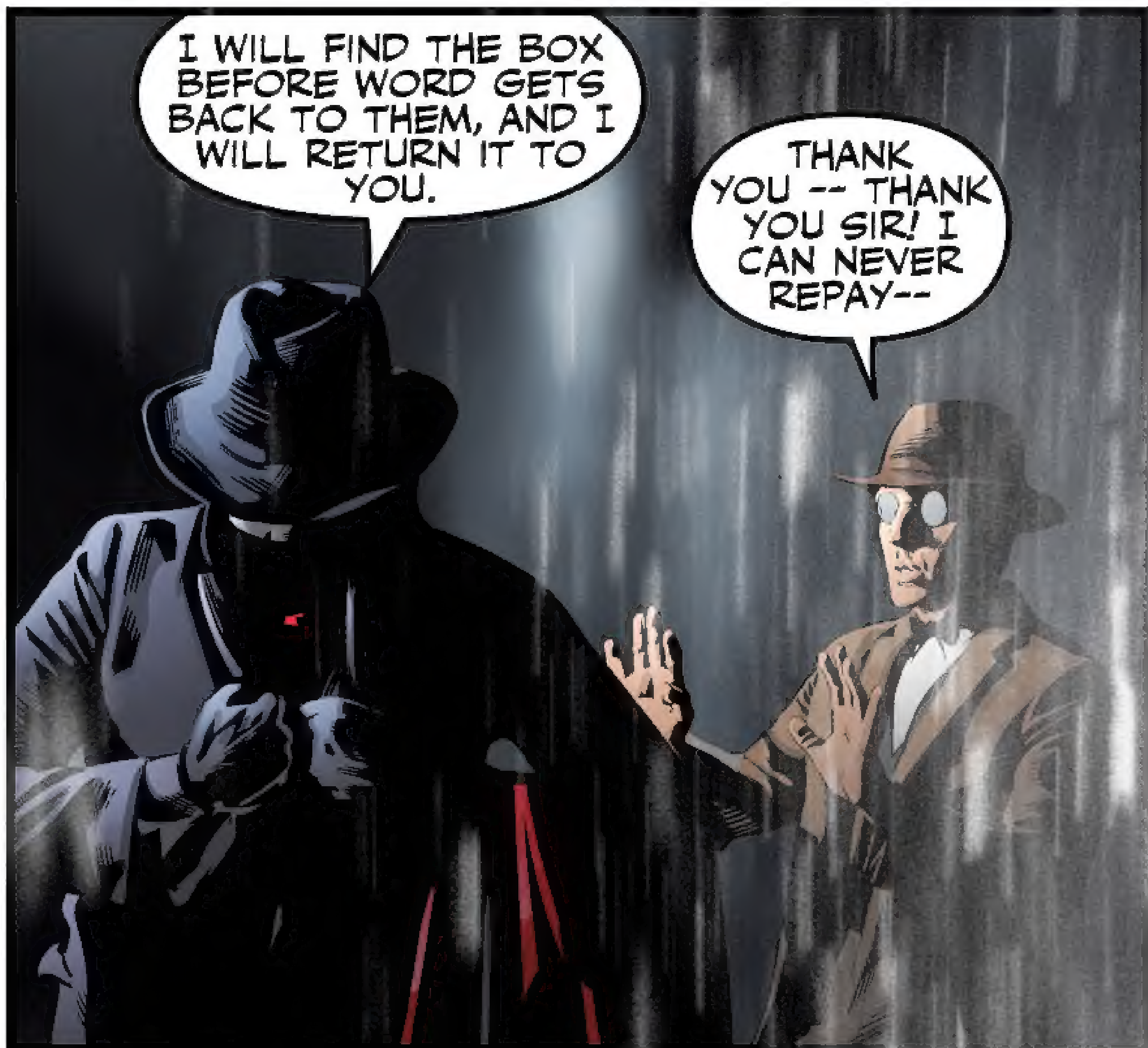
HMH.
I
ACTUALLY
BELIEVE
YOU.



CURSE IT ALL, JUST LIKE MY **FATHER** TO GET BALLED UP BY A **PRETTY FACE** -- IF THE MASTER OF THE TEMPLE LEARNS OF MY INDISCRETION--

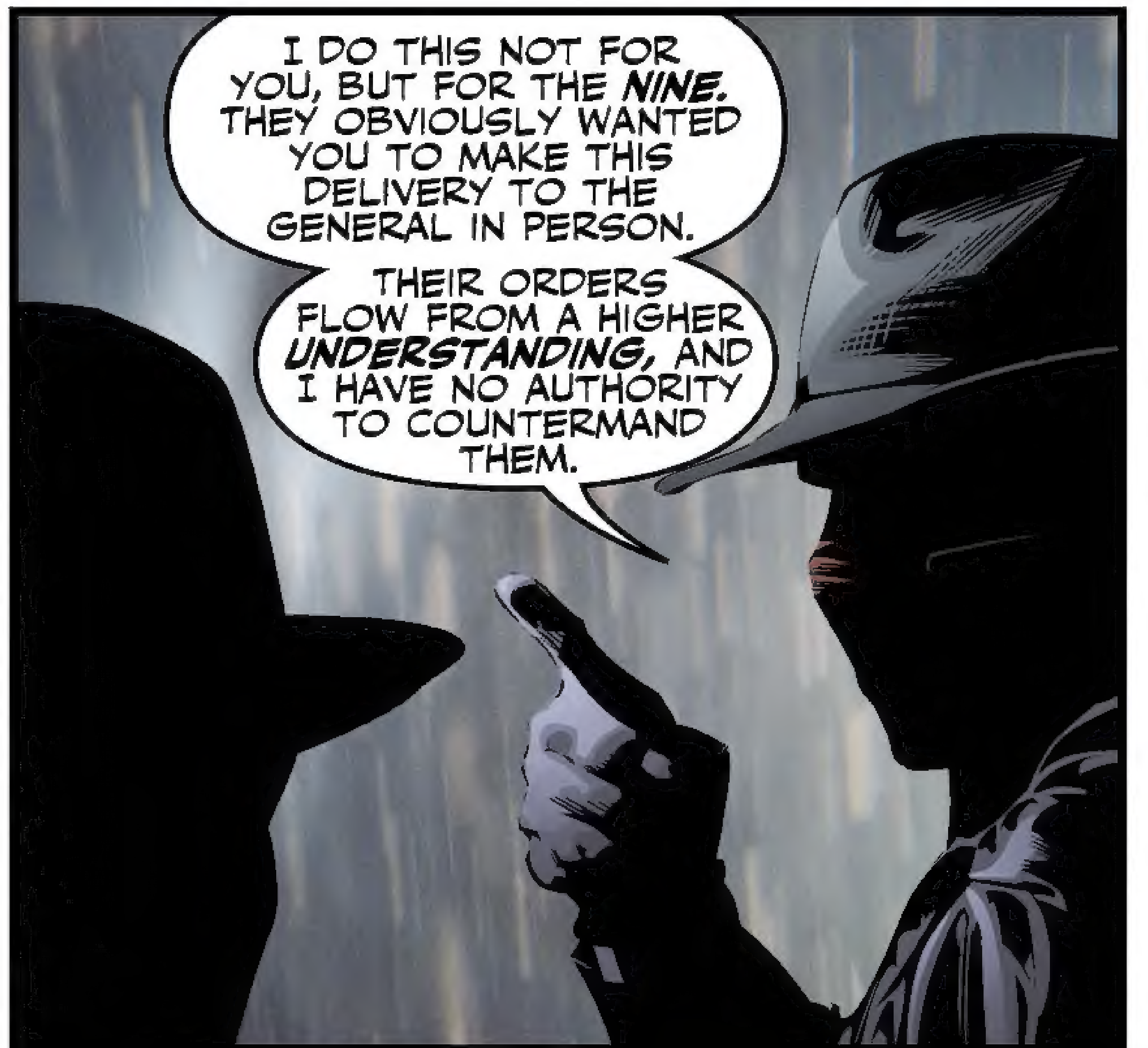
I DON'T SEE WHY HE WOULD. HE IS A WORLD AWAY.

AND WE ARE HERE.



I WILL FIND THE BOX BEFORE WORD GETS BACK TO THEM, AND I WILL RETURN IT TO YOU.

THANK YOU -- THANK YOU SIR! I CAN NEVER REPAY--



I DO THIS NOT FOR YOU, BUT FOR THE **NINE**. THEY OBVIOUSLY WANTED YOU TO MAKE THIS DELIVERY TO THE GENERAL IN PERSON.

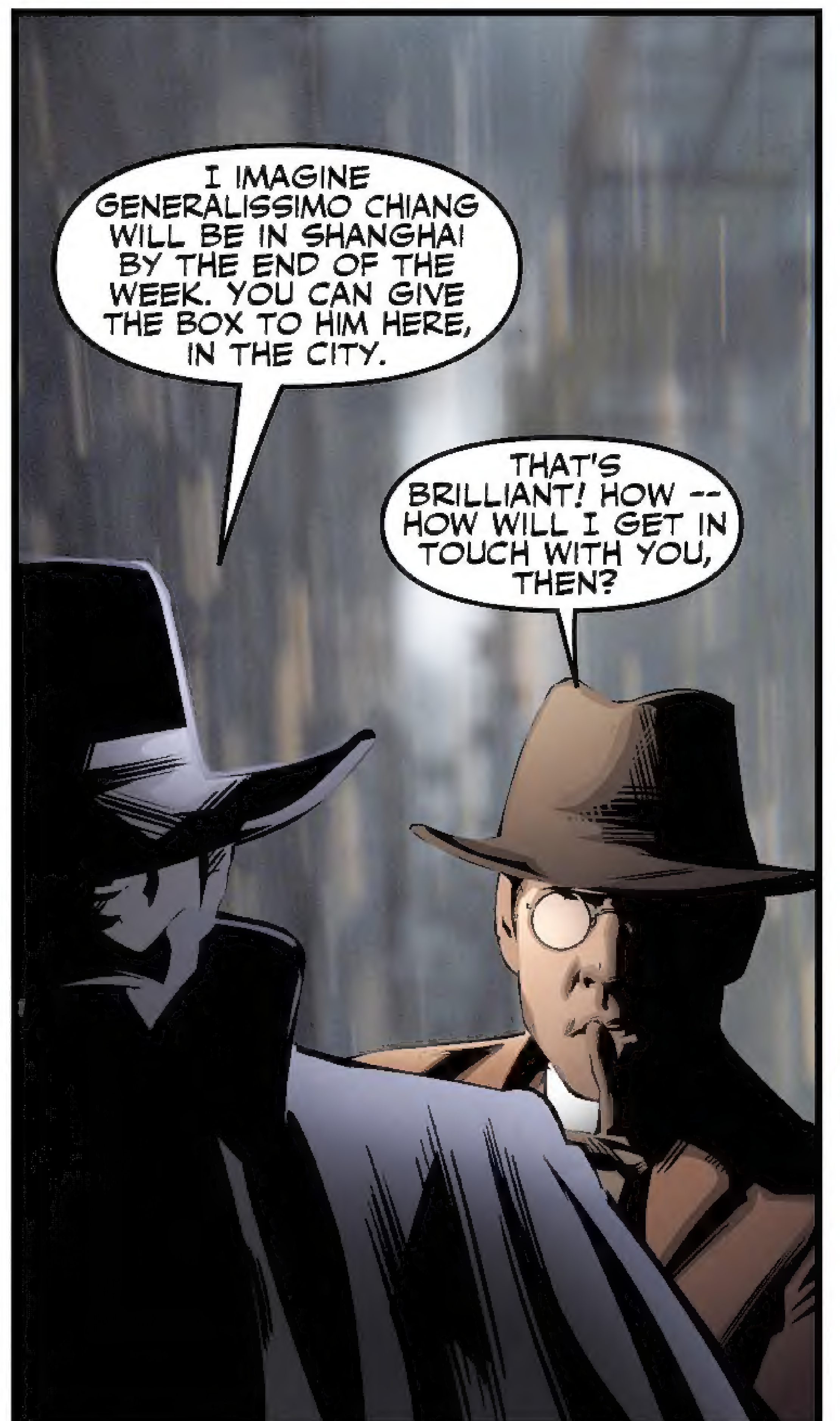
THEIR ORDERS FLOW FROM A HIGHER **UNDERSTANDING**, AND I HAVE NO AUTHORITY TO COUNTERMAND THEM.



CAN YOU ARRANGE -- HOW WILL I GET TO CHEKIANG?

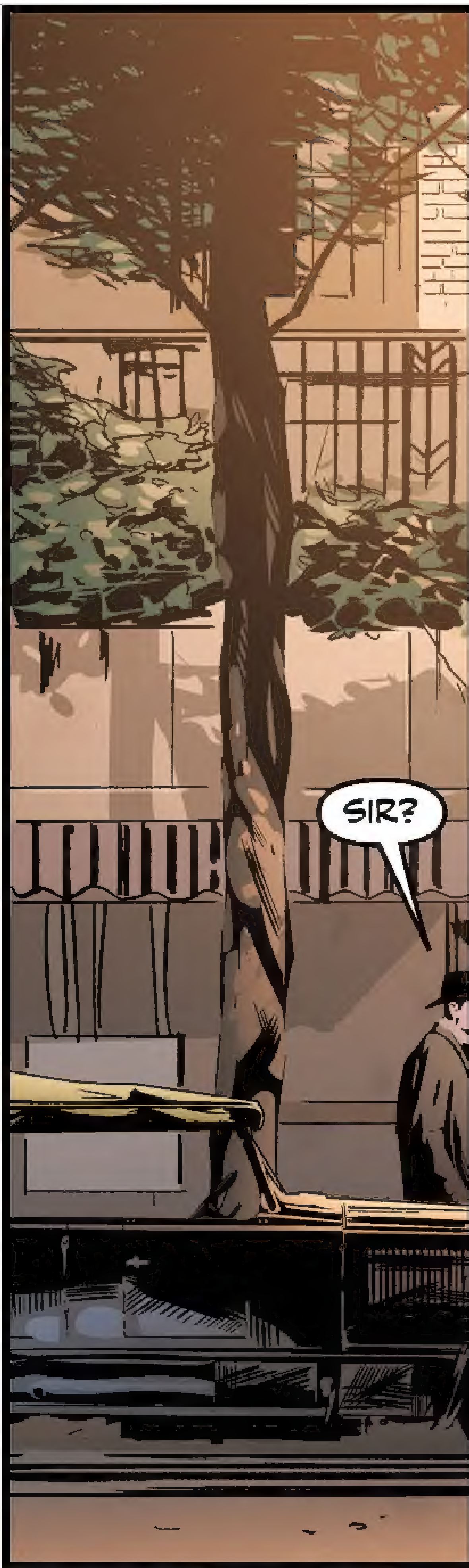
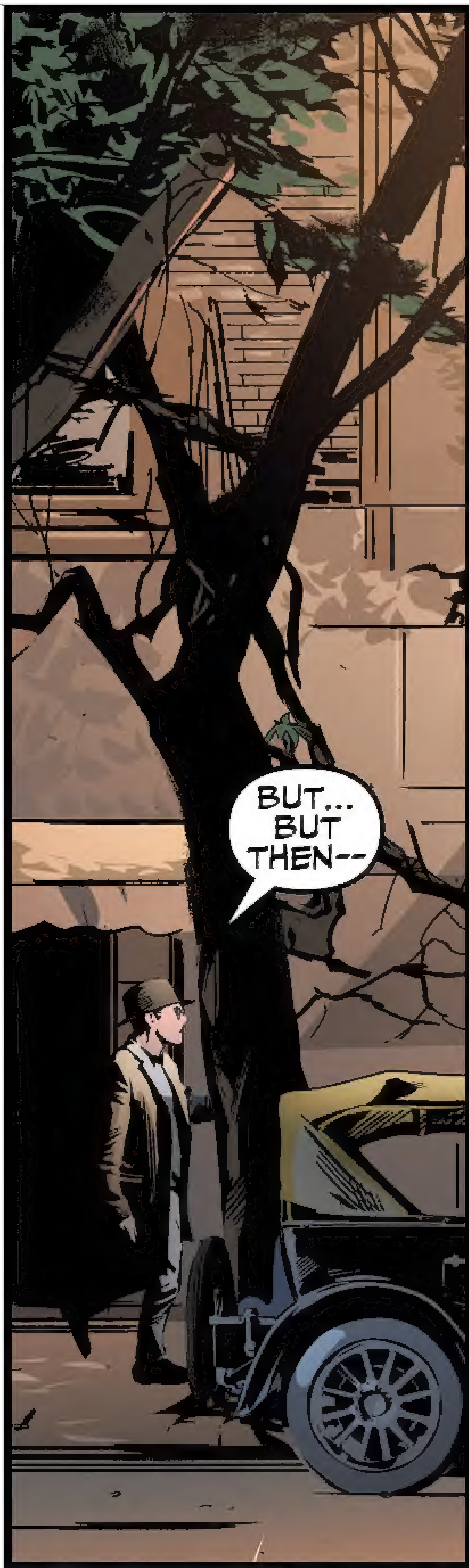
EVENTS MOVE FASTER THAN THE WIRE SERVICES CAN FOLLOW. CHIANG'S ARMY ISN'T IN CHEKIANG PROVINCE ANYMORE.

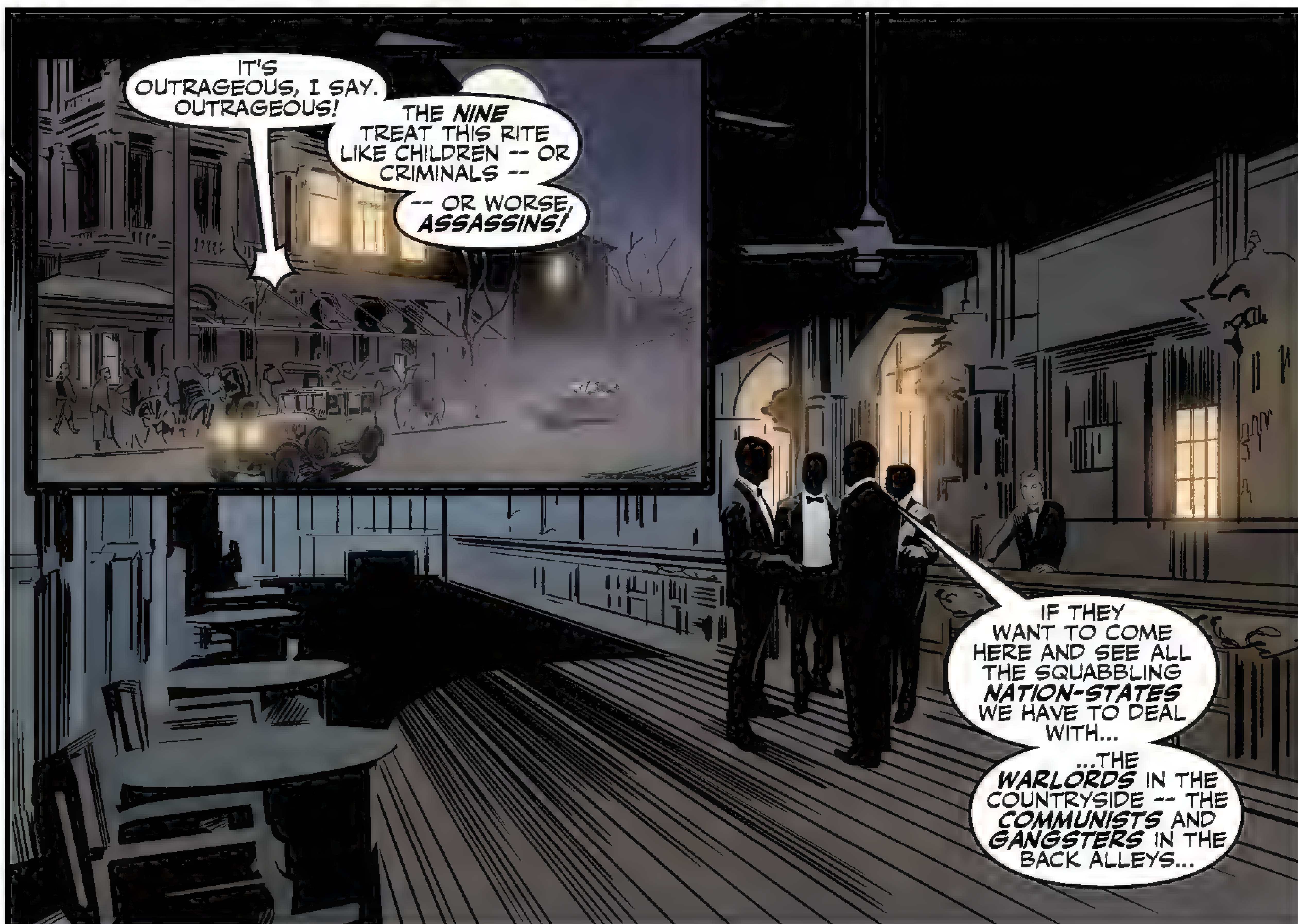
THE ARMORED TRAIN KEEPING IT AT BAY... HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED.



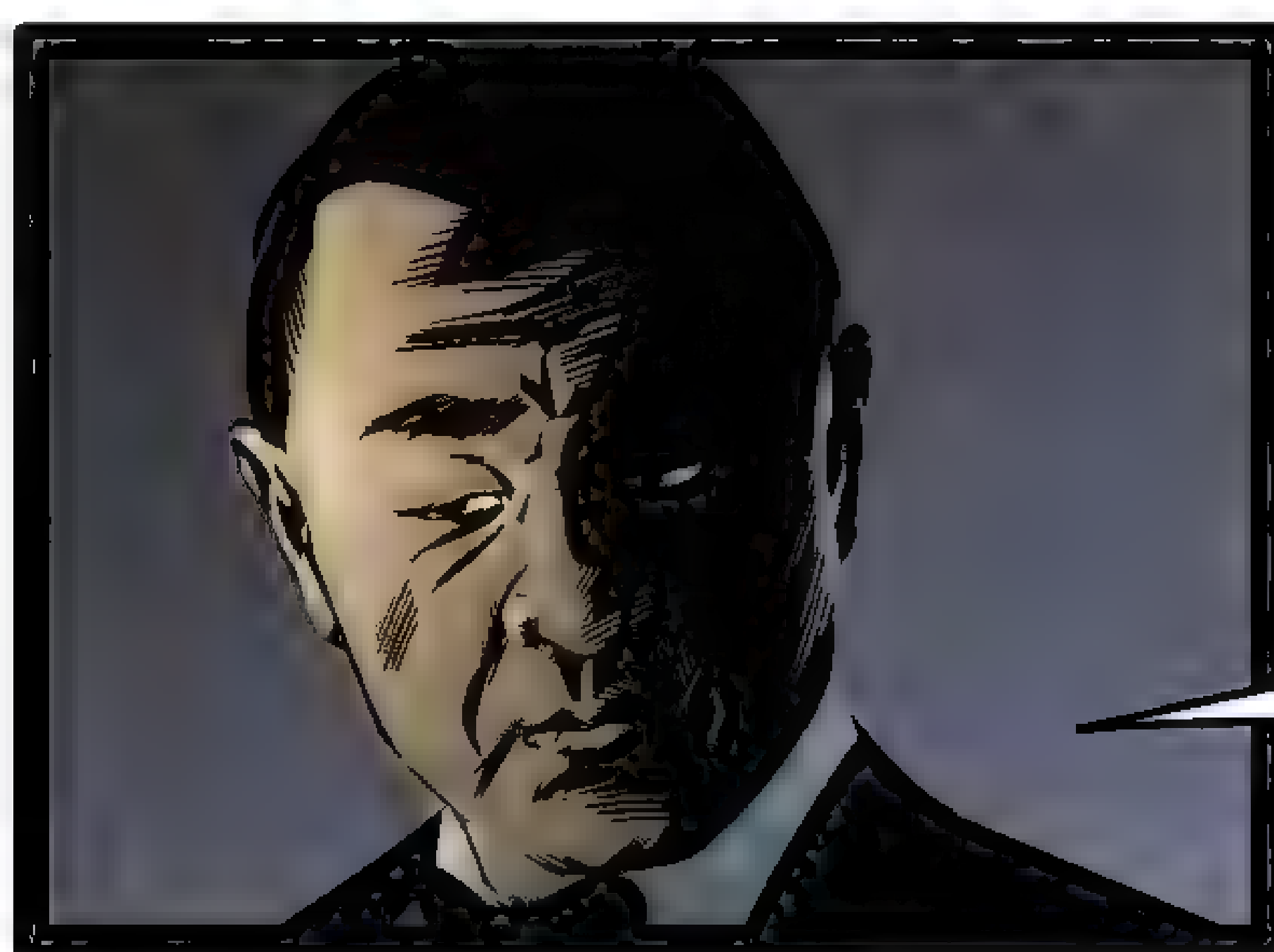
I IMAGINE GENERALISSIMO CHIANG WILL BE IN SHANGHAI BY THE END OF THE WEEK. YOU CAN GIVE THE BOX TO HIM HERE, IN THE CITY.

THAT'S BRILLIANT! HOW -- HOW WILL I GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU, THEN?





...LET THEM **SEE** HOW BLOODY **EASY** IT IS TO KEEP ORDER IN THIS **CESSPOOL**, I SAY!



CALM YOURSELF, COXWORTH -- THE INNER SANCTUM HAS NEVER OPERATED THAT WAY, AND IT NEVER WILL.

THANK YOU, TATSUMI. IT HAS BEEN THE DUTY -- AND THE HONOR -- OF THIS RITE TO KEEP THE MOST IMPORTANT CITY IN CHINA FUNCTIONING SMOOTHLY.

AND WE HAVE DONE THE BEST WE CAN, DIVIDING LOCAL TEMPLARS AS THE COLONIAL POWERS DIVIDED SHANGHAI.





MASTER
TATSUMI LOOKS
AFTER THE
JAPANESE IN
THE HONGKEW
DISTRICT...

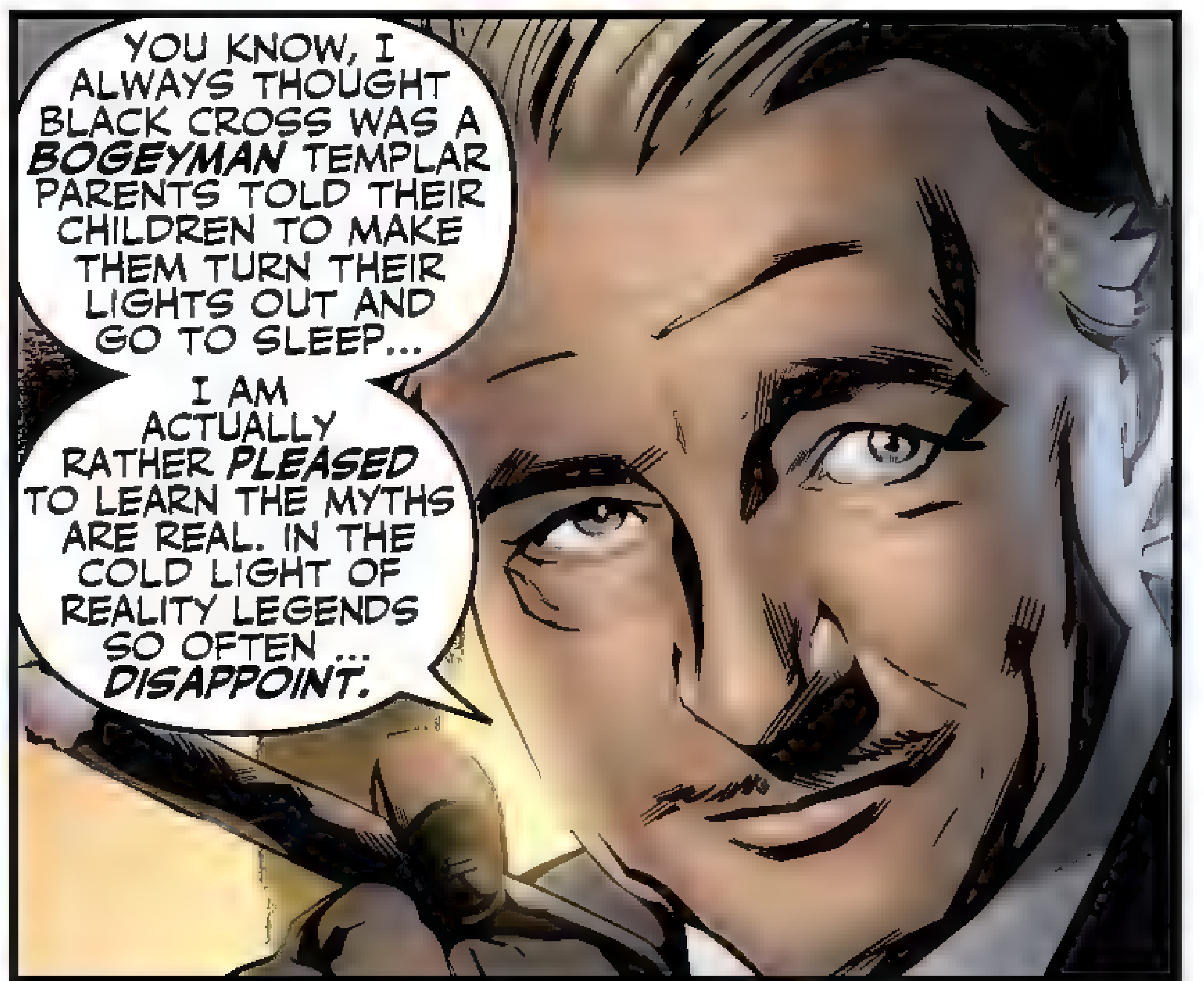
...MASTER
JOFFRE THE **FRENCH**
CONCESSION...

...AND YOU,
MASTER COXWORTH,
WITH THE BRITISH AND
AMERICANS IN THE
INTERNATIONAL
CONCESSION...



...BUT
PERHAPS SUCH
DIVISIONS HAVE
WEAKENED OUR
OVERALL CONTROL.
AND THE NINE
HAVE NOTIFIED US
WE ARE ON
PROBATION...

...IN THE
CUSTOMARY
WAY.



YOU KNOW, I
ALWAYS THOUGHT
BLACK CROSS WAS A
BOGEYMAN TEMPLAR
PARENTS TOLD THEIR
CHILDREN TO MAKE
THEM TURN THEIR
LIGHTS OUT AND
GO TO SLEEP...

I AM
ACTUALLY
RATHER **PLEASED**
TO LEARN THE MYTHS
ARE REAL. IN THE
COLD LIGHT OF
REALITY LEGENDS
SO OFTEN
DISAPPOINT.



BALDERDASH!
I, FOR ONE, **REFUSE**
TO BE INTIMIDATED,
FESSENDEN! WE ALL
KNOW WHAT HAPPENED
TO THAT BOUNDER
THADDEUS GIFT!

I RESPECT YOUR
POSITION AS GRAND
MASTER OF THIS RITE,
BUT I DEMAND TO SEE
THE FACE OF THIS MAN,
WHO WOULD BE MY
JUDGE, JURY AND
EXECUTIONER!



CIVILIZED
MEN GET TO **MEET**
THEIR ACCUSERS,
TO LOOK THEM IN
THE EYE!



YES.
WELL.
HENCE
THE NEED
FOR *THIS*
MEETING.



YOU WILL
NOT KNOW THE
TRUE NAME OR
FACE OF THE
BLACK CROSS.
I DO NOT.
FOR ALL
I KNOW HE IS
MORE THAN
ONE MAN.



OR
SHE IS A
WOMAN.
OR MANY
WOMEN.
OR ANY
COMBINATION
THEREOF.



THE
INSTRUCTIONS
FROM THE INNER
SANCTUM ARE
QUITE CLEAR:

NONE OF
YOUR RESPECTIVE
CONCESSIONS IS TO
INTERFERE WITH BLACK
CROSS IN HIS DUTIES.
IF HE REQUESTS YOUR
AID, YOU MUST GIVE
HIM WHATEVER HE
ASKS.



BUT YOU
MUST NOT INFORM
ANYONE THAT HE HAS
CONTACTED YOU.
INCLUDING ME.

OR BETRAY
ANYTHING
ABOUT HIS
IDENTITY.



THAT IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, STIRLING, BUT HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO THIS IF WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE MAN EVEN **LOOKS** LIKE?



THESE ARE THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR OUR RITE.
I HAVE RECEIVED NO OTHERS.



BLAZES TO ALL THAT. WHAT IS SHE DOING HERE? SHE'S NO MASTER!



I INVITED **MADAME SUN** OUT OF COURTESY TO HER LATE HUSBAND, FOUNDER OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, WHICH OUR HOPE FOR ALL CHINA, **GENERALISSIMO CHIANG KAI-SHEK**, NOW LEADS.



SUN YAT-SEN WAS **PROUDEST** OF HIS MEMBERSHIP IN THE **TEMPLAR ORDER**. AND THE SACRIFICES THIS RITE MADE, LAYING DOWN THE FOUNDATION FOR HIS GREAT WORK.

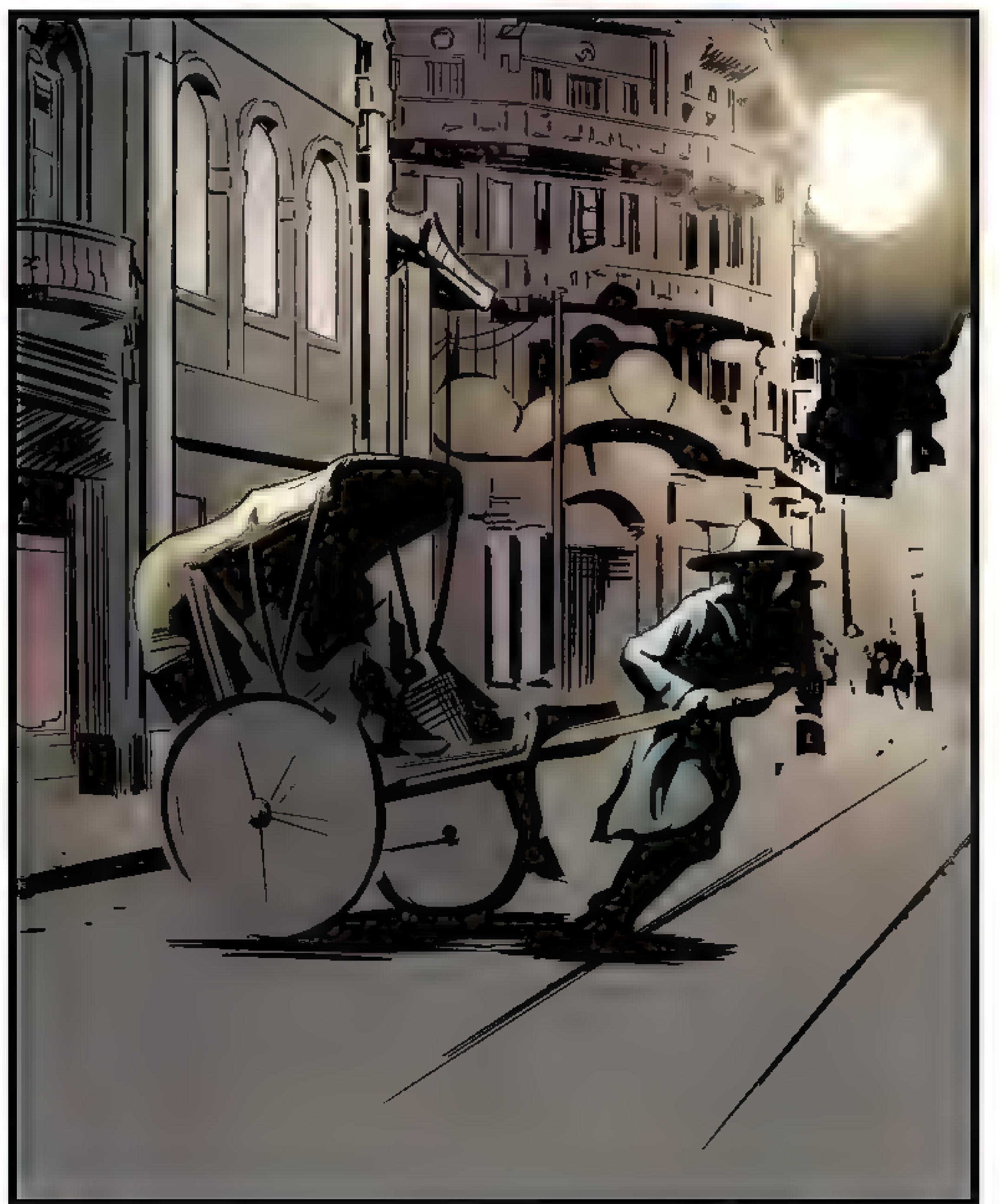
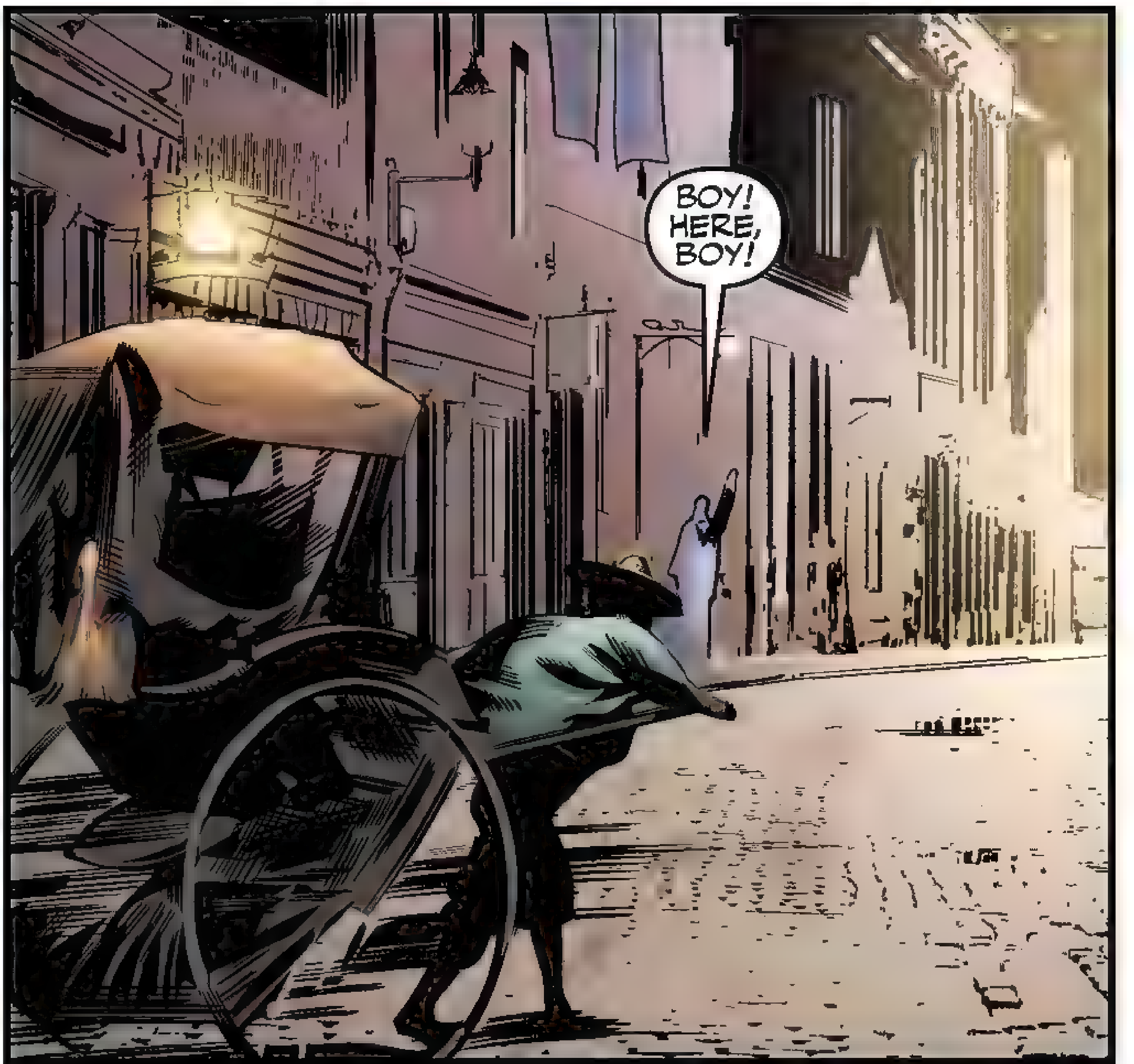
EVEN AFTER **ASSASSIN SCUM** ENDED HIS LIFE, HIS DREAM OF A UNITED CHINA LIVES ON.



AND NOW THE **NINE'S** MOST EFFECTIVE AND FEARED **AGENT** HAS BEEN ENLISTED IN OUR CAUSE?

WHO CAN
STAND IN OUR
WAY?









ONE OF THEM HAD A PASS PERMITTING ENTRY TO CERTAIN NEIGHBORHOODS OF OLD TOWN, ISSUED BY THE "HOP WO SOCIETY."

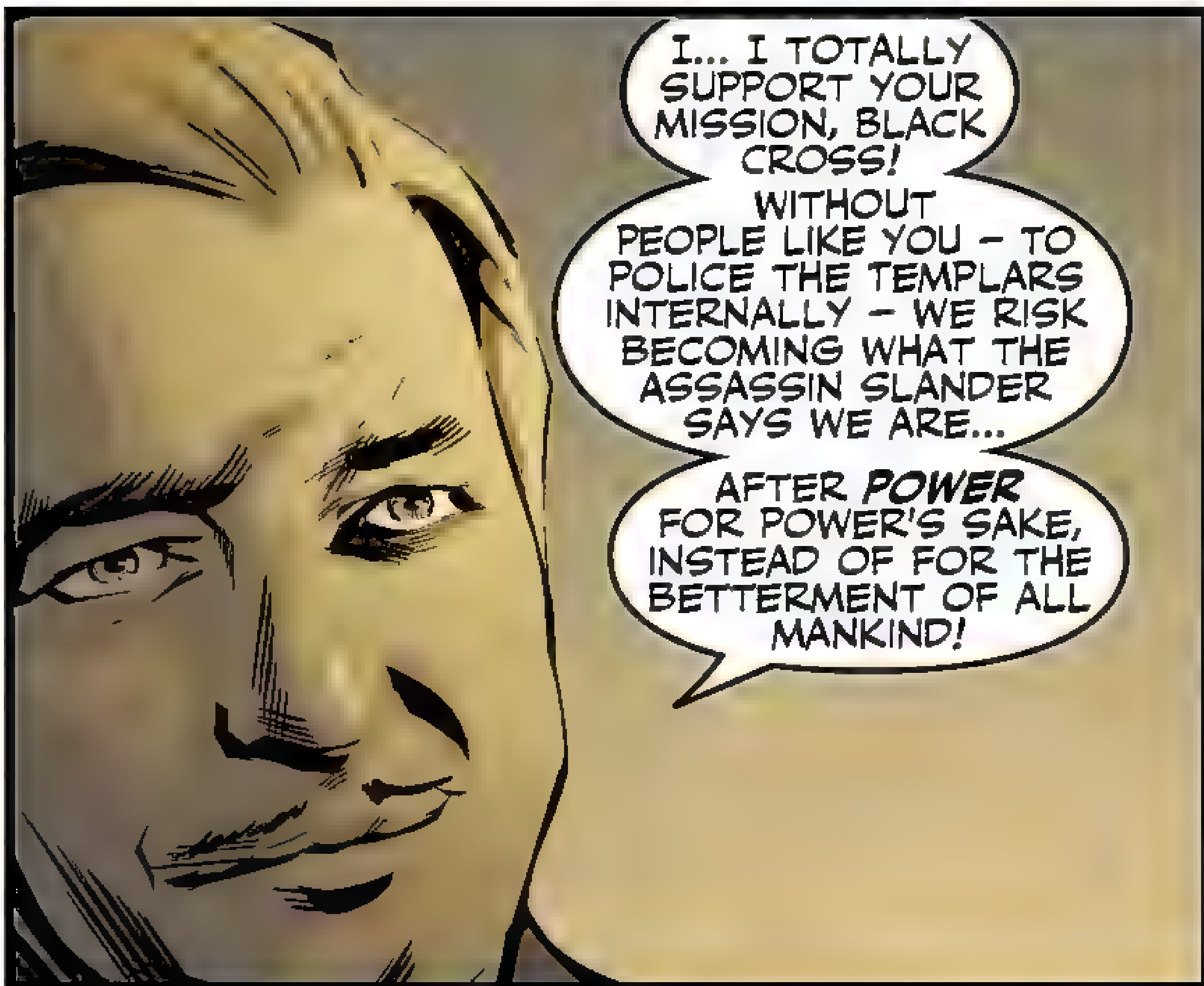
WHAT IS HOP WO, AND WHAT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO YOUR PEOPLE?



I HAVE NO RELATIONSHIP TO THEM! NONE! HOP WO IS A SO-CALLED "TRADE UNION", BUT THEY'RE **COMMUNISTS**, PLAIN AND SIMPLE! MY **HONEST** MEN WOULD ONLY DEAL WITH THEM TO **ARREST** THEM!

CHIANG'S NATIONALISTS ARE ALLIED WITH THE REDS, THEY MUST WANT TO KEEP HIM FROM JOINING OUR ORDER! IT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION!

HRM. YOUR LOGIC HAS A CERTAIN APPEAL.



I... I TOTALLY SUPPORT YOUR MISSION, BLACK CROSS!

WITHOUT PEOPLE LIKE YOU - TO POLICE THE TEMPLARS INTERNALLY - WE RISK BECOMING WHAT THE ASSASSIN SLANDER SAYS WE ARE...

AFTER **POWER** FOR POWER'S SAKE, INSTEAD OF FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ALL MANKIND!



I THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALIDATION.

I SHALL CHERISH IT ALWAYS.

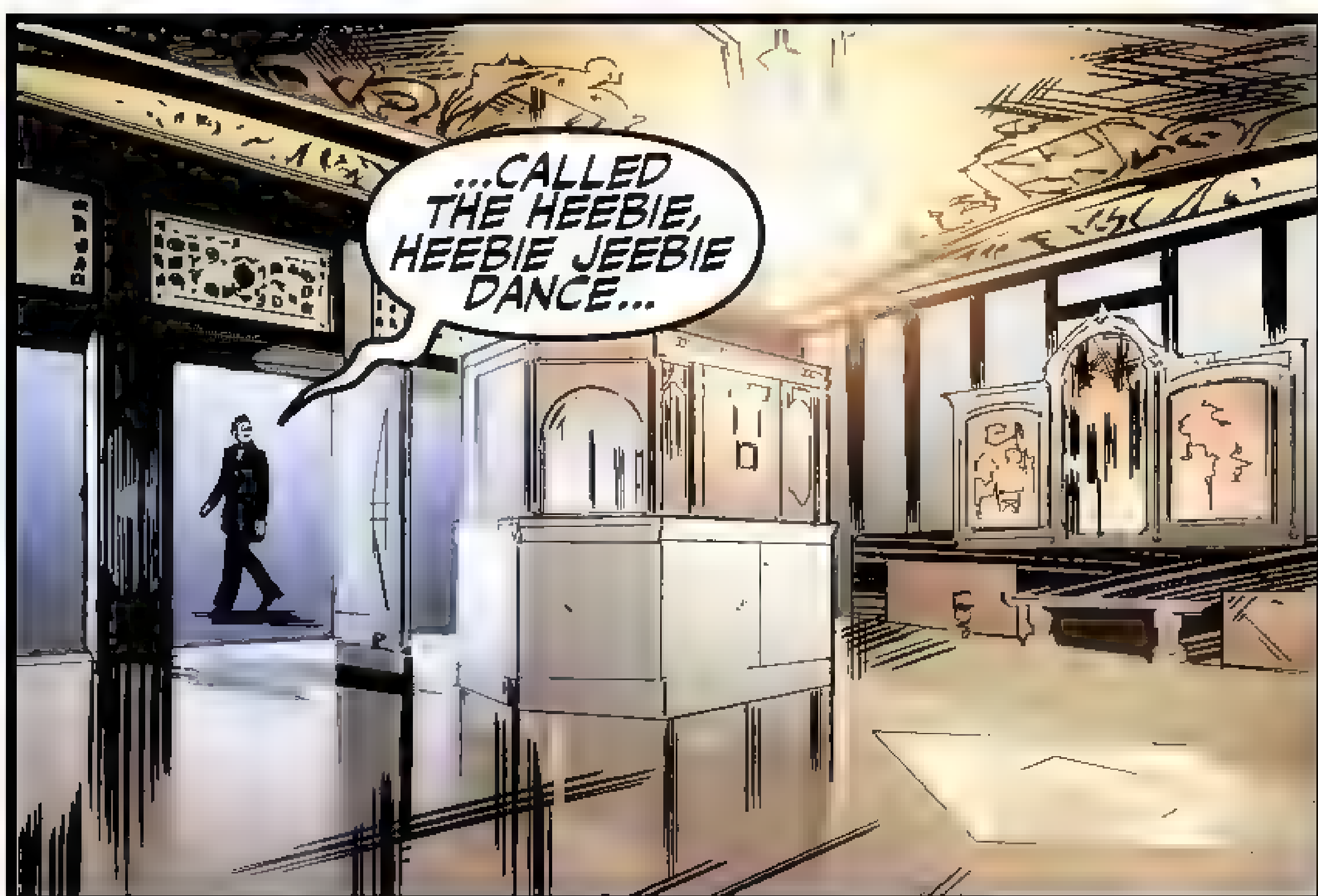
ONE LAST THING:



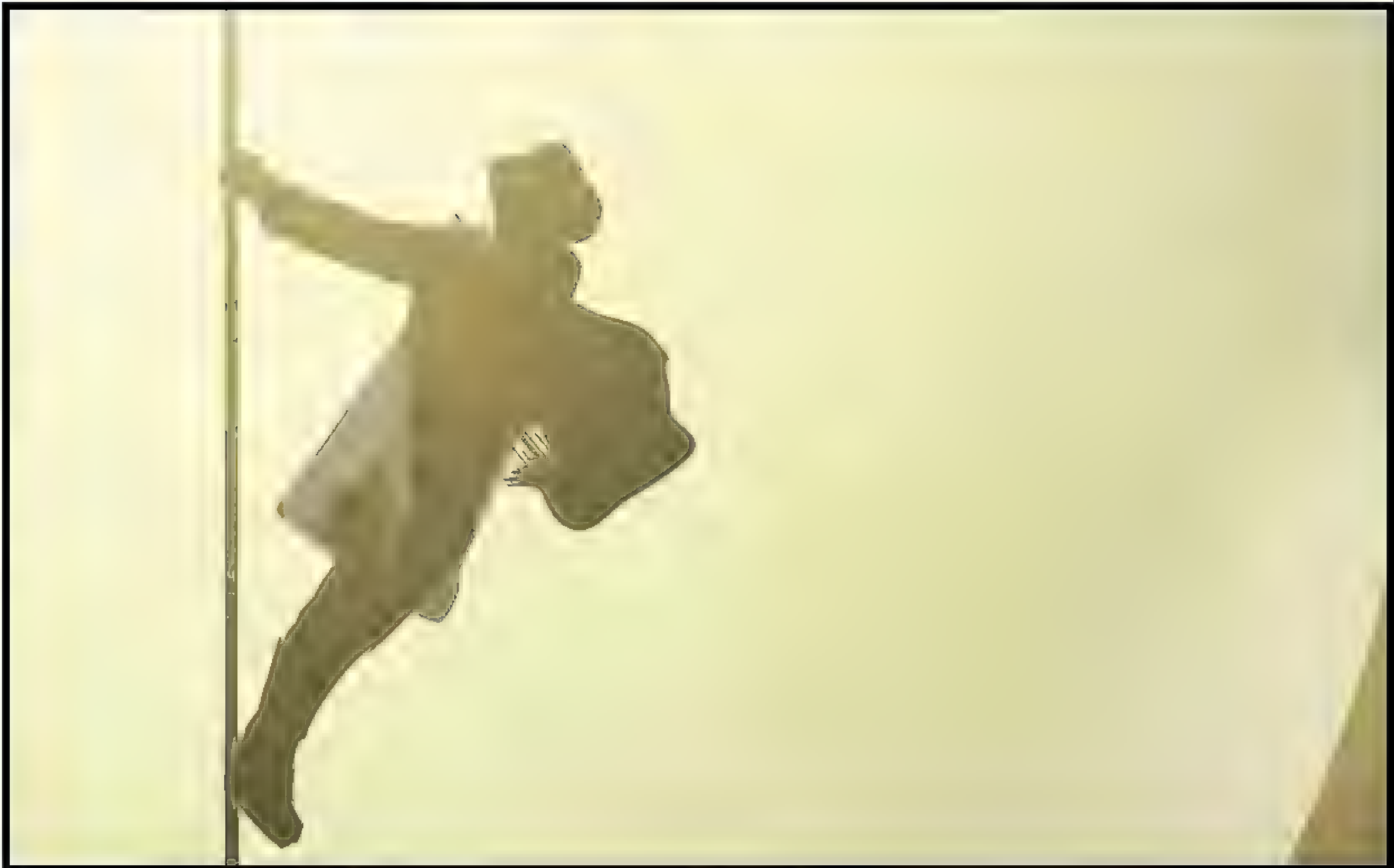
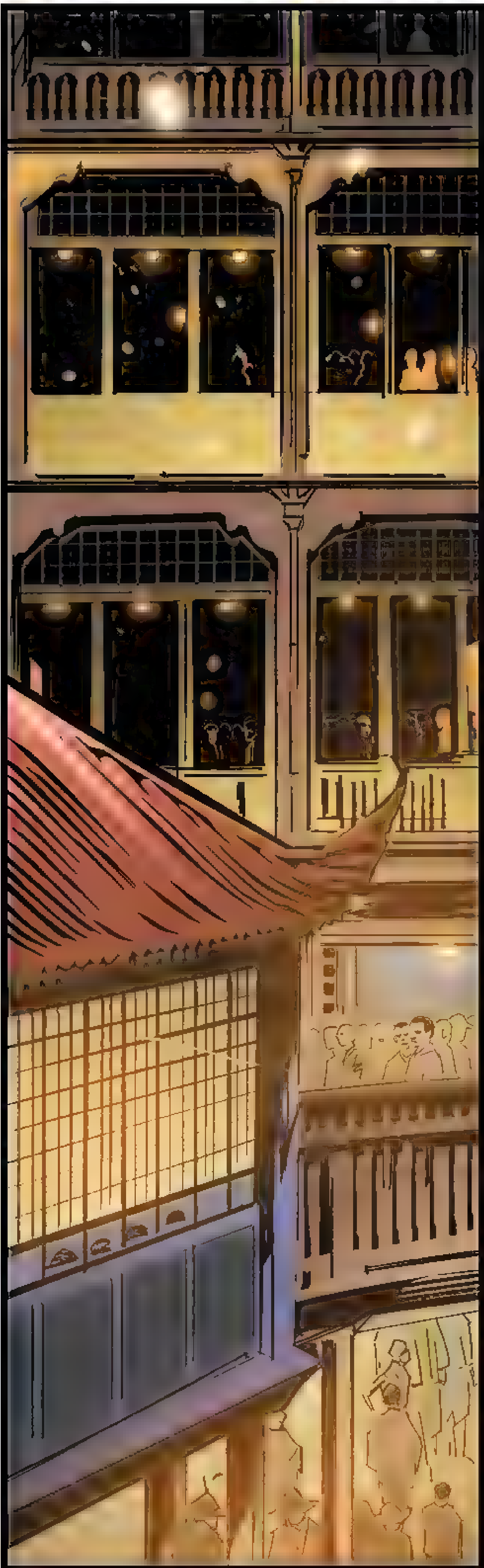
THE HOP WO SOCIETY'S ADDRESS - ON THE CORNER OF AVENUE EDWARD VII AND YU YA CHING ROAD - DO YOU KNOW--

REALLY? THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT...

THAT'S THE **GREAT WORLD** - THE AMUSEMENT PALACE!











YOUR
PARTNER,
INSPECTOR
MELVILLE, HAD
A NASTY
FALL.
I HAD
ONLY *MINIMAL*
INVOLVEMENT.

I
SWEAR.



⟨HE'S HERE!
JUST LIKE
I SAID HE
WOULD BE⟩

⟨SAVE ME --
PLEASE!⟩



WHY,
HELLO
THERE.



TO BE CONTINUED...

ASSASSIN'S CREED® TEMPLARS

BLACK CROSS

PART 2 OF 5

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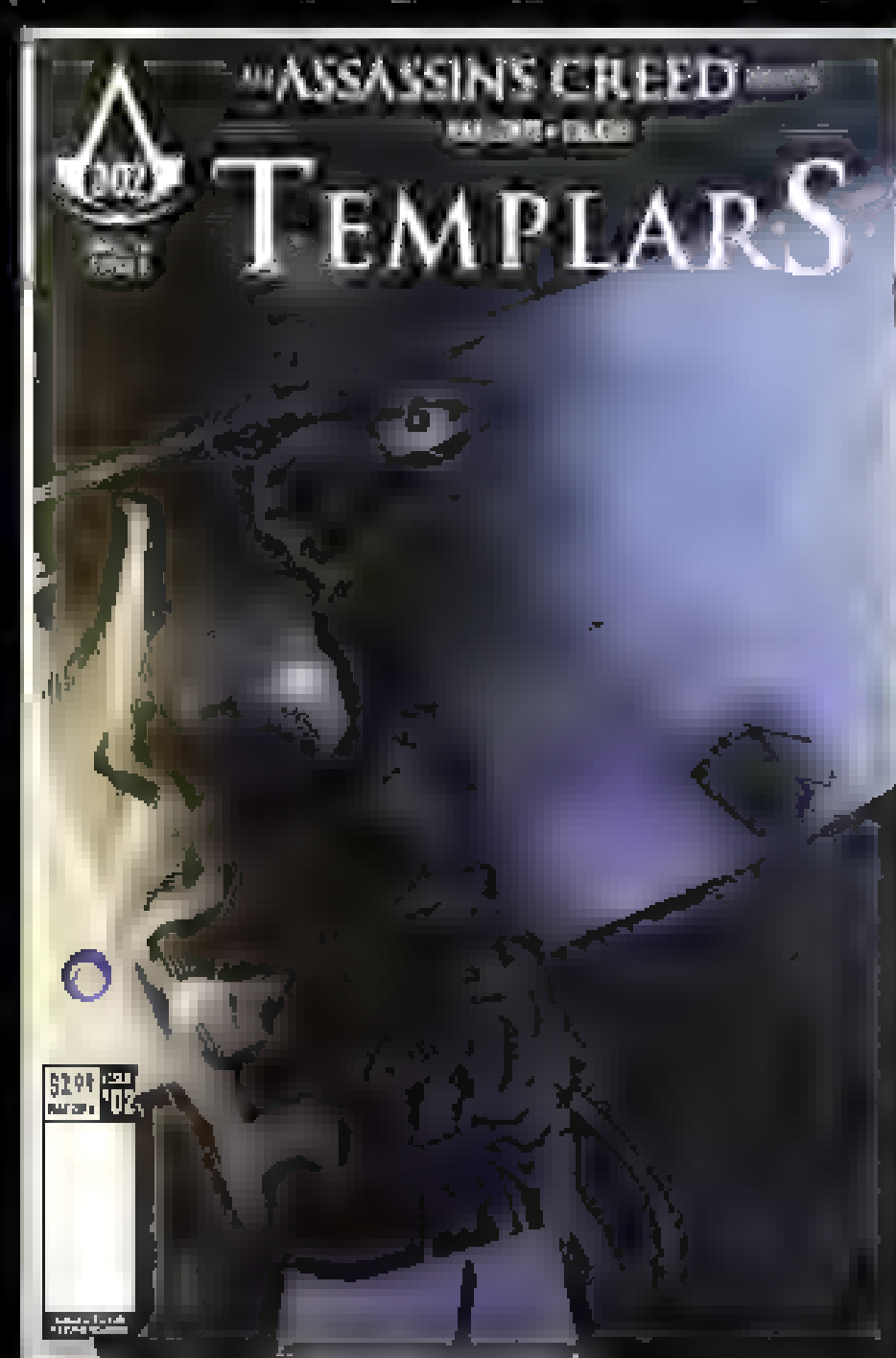
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Aymar Azaizia, Anouk Bachman, Richard Farrese, Raphaël Lacoste, Caroline Lamache and Clémence Deleuze.
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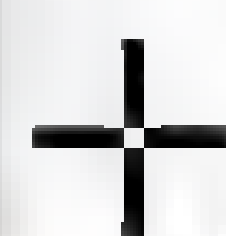


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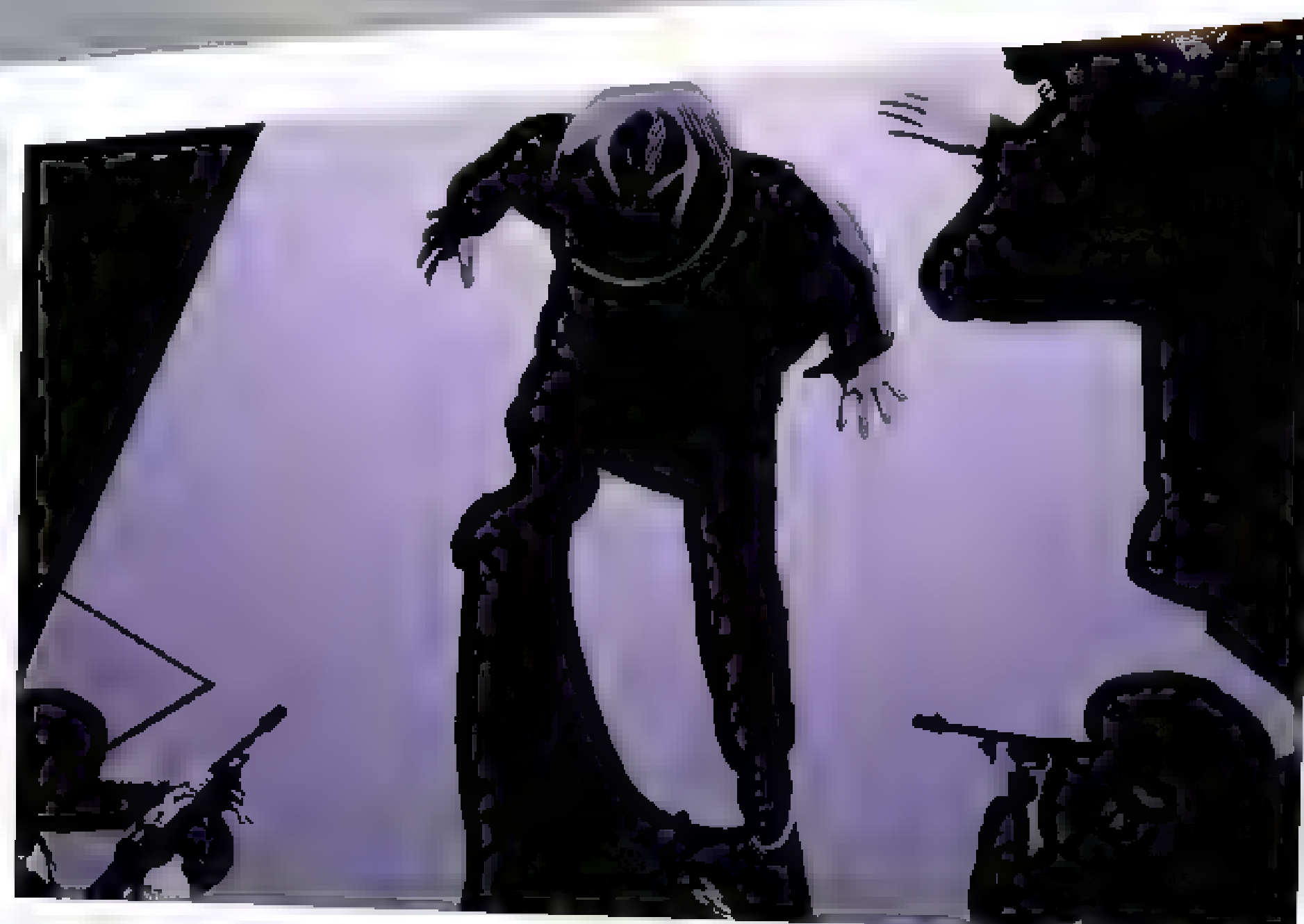
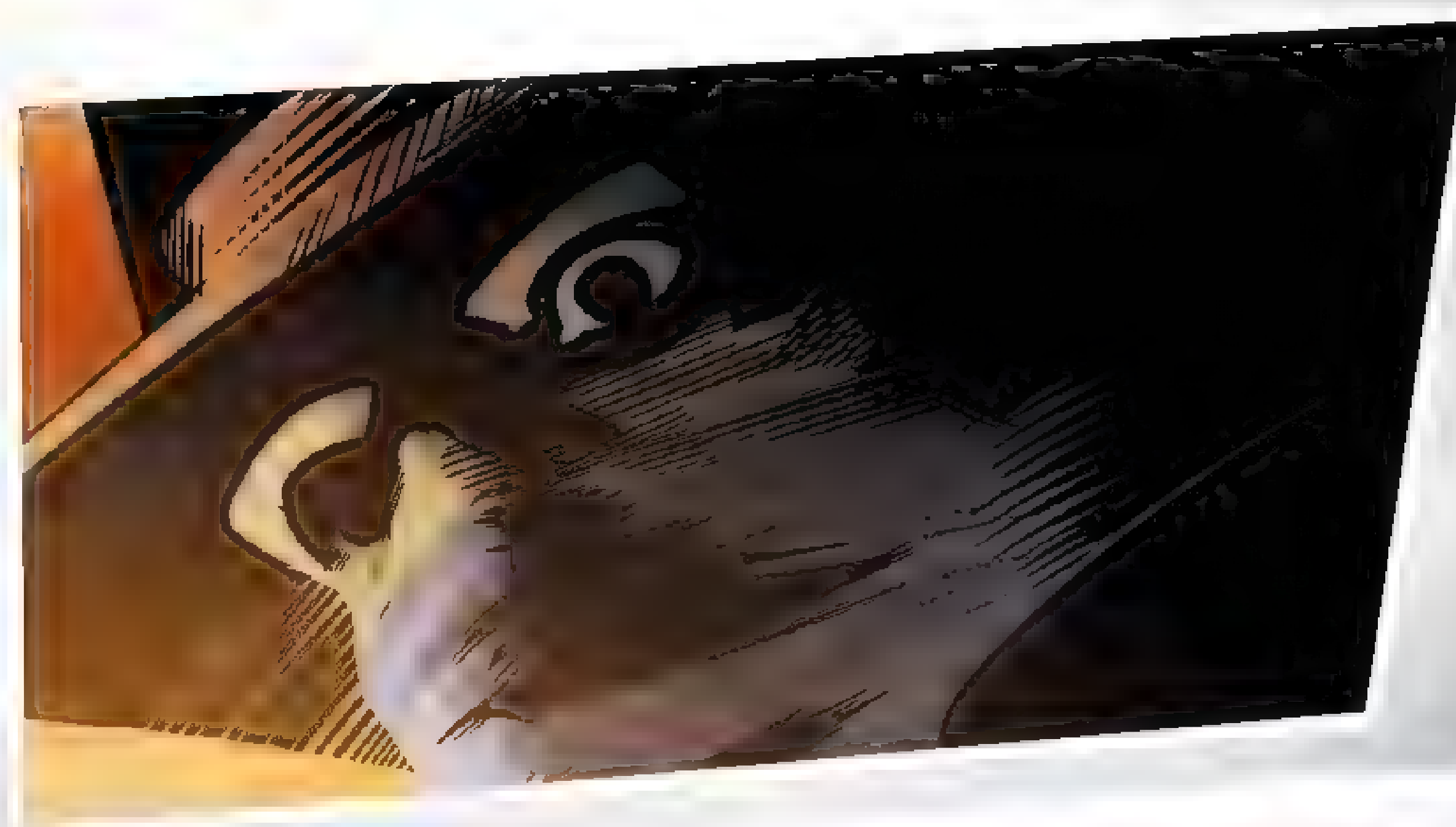


NEXT — ON SALE JUNE — ISSUE



SONGS AND SCREAMS

Surrounded by enemies, out-manned and out-gunned, Black Cross descends deep into the murky Shanghai underworld. He's looking for answers and for the next clue that will lead him to his ultimate goal. Alone and unarmed, he comes face to face with the very thing he is seeking... but will he get the chance to use that hard won knowledge?



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ASSASSIN'S CREED TEMPLARS

THE CITY, THE SEA AND THE SHANGHAI BUND...

Today, Shanghai is not just China's largest city but also the world's. It has a population of 24 million people and is the country's financial and economic hub, as well as being the world's busiest container shipping port. And it's the port that has made the city – sat on the Huangpu River – a manmade tributary of the Yangtze River, a source of international intrigue, power struggles and hostility.

Shanghai was one of a number of ports opened up to foreigners after the signing of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. The treaty was struck between China and Britain and it was agreed that land would be given over to the British in the city so they could more closely control their interests.

Naturally, the new arrivals chose to be situated where they could keep the keenest eye on those interests – the banks lining the Huangpu River. And with them they brought their own aesthetics and styles. Westernised buildings began to appear along a section of the riverfront known as The Bund. The British were joined by the United States in 1844 and a Concession was granted to the French in 1848. In 1868, the foreign powers

consolidated their hold into the Shanghai International Settlement and a legal and bureaucratic headache of epic proportions was born for all involved.

The running of the Settlement fell to the largely British-controlled Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC). As western influence made itself felt, the SMC took over virtually all aspects of daily life within the Settlement, despite the fact that it was not actually a foreign colony – it was still, on paper, controlled by the Chinese government, and should have been operated along the lines of an embassy or foreign consulate.

However, it was very much a self-contained entity. The SMC acquired local companies to provide power and utilities; it had its own police force and legal system; it even controlled the transport network, its trams and rickshaws. Drivers of the latter were said to need three licenses to ply their trade – one for the Chinese areas of the city, one for the Settlement, and another for the French Concession! Such rigorously maintained bureaucracy naturally led to friction with the local Chinese and the British found themselves at the receiving

end of a serious international incident when members of the Shanghai Municipal Police opened fire on Chinese protestors on May 30th, 1925.

The Municipal Police was largely recruited from locals, but foreigners, once again largely British and Commonwealth officers, filled the higher ranks; there was also a large contingent of Japanese. Within the Settlement, Japanese-controlled cotton mills had become the focus of sometimes-violent demonstrations. After a Japanese foreman shot one of the demonstrators, rioting, mass protests and strikes followed.

The situation was exacerbated by the arrest of a number of Chinese students within the Settlement. Crowds gathered outside the police station where they were being held. Naturally, reports of what followed are at best confused, with the policemen in the station claiming that the crowd had turned violent and were attempting to force their way into the station, hoping to release the imprisoned students. In the melee, the officer in charge apparently opened fire on the protestors, triggering a volley from his men. As many as nine people in the crowd were killed and many others gravely injured.

The incident instigated a wave of rioting and strikes that left hundreds

dead and seriously threatened foreign, and in particular British, interests in the Settlement. However, while Britain did not find itself directly culpable for the shootings, the threat to the Settlement's economic wellbeing, as well as pressure from its foreign partners, was enough to institute major change to the way the Settlement was run.

Despite the sometimes-volatile nature of the Settlement, it maintained a reputation for luxury and wealth. The Roaring Twenties were not lost on the foreigners living in Shanghai and the Settlement brimmed with nightclubs and dancehalls that swung to the raucous sound of Jazz.

The Bund itself housed a number of luxury hotels, banks and offices, built in a plethora of styles – Gothic, Renaissance, Neo-Classical and, of course, Art Deco. Amongst the most famous is the Shanghai Club Building, built in 1864 to house a men's club for members of the then British Concession. The original was torn down and replaced in 1910 by a Baroque Revival structure six storeys high that remained one of Shanghai's most exclusive venues during the 1920s. Another, the Palace Hotel, was the vision of Sir Victor Sassoon. Construction began in 1927, and the building, which survived the Japanese invasion of 1937, remains a jewel on the Bund, and one of Shanghai's most popular attractions. 🏰

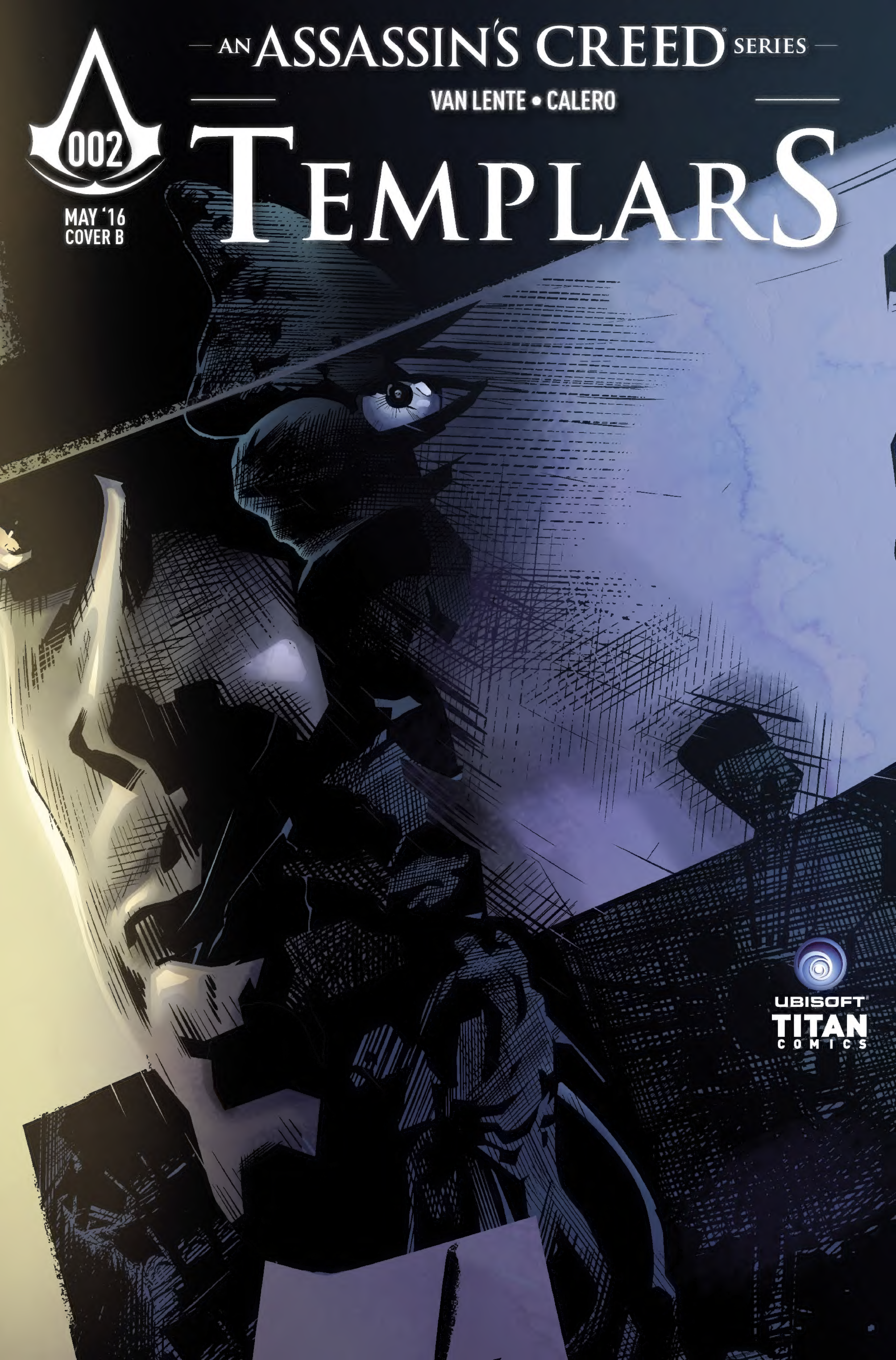


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